



Watersheds

New England includes many ecosystems that, by virtue of their ecological value, recreational value, or proximity to large populations, hold a special significance to us. EPA - New England is focusing particular attention and resources on these special places. Working closely with our federal, state and local partners, these community-based initiatives are delivering tangible environmental improvements to these areas.

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Fact Sheet/March 2000

Charles River

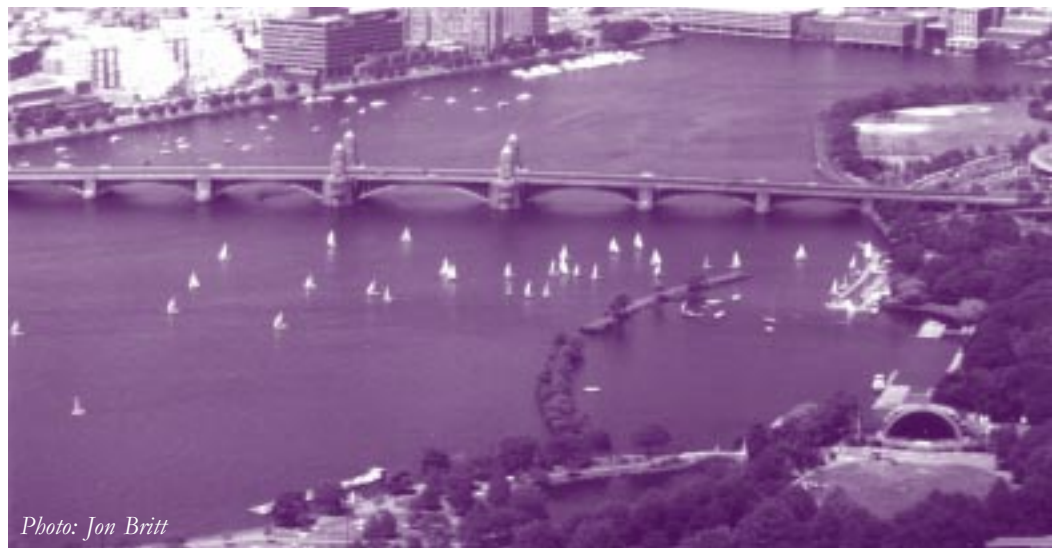


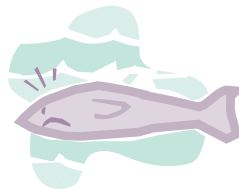
Photo: Jon Britt

What Makes The Charles River Watershed Special?

- One of the busiest recreational rivers in the world, the lower Charles is lined with boat houses, sports fields, and performance facilities and attracts 20,000 users daily and up to a half-million people for special events.

Why Is The River Polluted?

- Stormwater runoff, sewer overflows and illegal sewer connections carry bacterial pollution to the river.
- In 1995, swimming standards were met only 19% of the time, and boating standards only 39%.



What Is "Clean Charles 2005"?

The "Clean Charles 2005" initiative aims to make the Charles River swimmable and fishable by Earth Day 2005.

- In April 2000, EPA issued its annual report card for 1999 on the river's health, giving it a B, an improvement from a D in 1995, based on Charles River Watershed Association's monthly monitoring results.

1995	D
1996	C-
1997	C
1998	B-
1999	B
2005 GOAL	A

Progress/Goals for the Future

What Partnership Progress Has Been Made?

- **Dry Weather Discharges:** All stormwater discharges to the river have been inspected for illegal connections. Removal of illegal connections is almost complete with roughly 1 million gallons of contaminated flow eliminated per day. Over 18 miles of sewerlines are being replaced in Waltham and Newton.
- **Students Involved:** Watershed Institute launched a program with 9 high schools in the lower Charles to monitor water quality, and bird and insect diversity near the river.
- Major enforcement cases were discovered during enforcement sweep settlement discussions. Settlements will include projects to restore the Charles River.
- Major progress made on combined sewer overflow (CSO) controls including: design of project to separate stormwater/sewer lines in Stony Brook area, closure of two outfalls, and dechlorination of the Cottage Farm CSO facility.
- Stormwater permit issued to Boston.
- Watertown formed "RiverWatch" to patrol and participate in river activities.

What Are The Actions Planned For 2000?

- Towns are building innovative stormwater management controls recommended and designed by an urban stormwater expert.

Charles River Watershed



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Progress/Goals (continued)

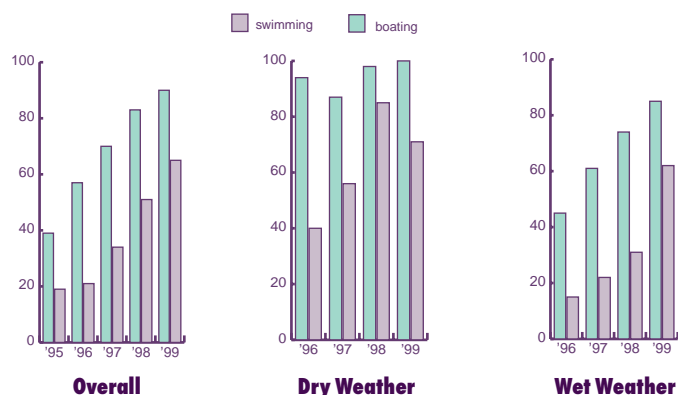
- Major research studies continue to: monitor recovery of high use areas, assess sediment contamination, and identify sources of river contamination.
- Boston University is constructing innovative stormwater management controls on campus.
- Clean Charles Coalition, a consortium of private institutions along the Charles, is educating on stormwater within and beyond its membership.
- MIT will host a competition to generate fresh ideas for restoration of the river.
- Municipalities will implement state-of-the-art municipal stormwater management plans.

Who Are The Partners?

EPA New England • MA Department of Environmental Protection • MA Executive Office of Environmental Affairs • MWRA • Boston Water and Sewer Commission • Town of Brookline • City of Cambridge • Town of Dedham • Town of Needham • City of Newton • City of Waltham • Town of Watertown • Town of Wellesley • Town of Weston • Metropolitan Area Planning Council • Boston Harbor Association • Charles River Watershed Association • Conservation Law Foundation • Friends of the Muddy River • Restore Olmstead's Waterway • Save the Harbor/Save the Bay • Watertown Citizens for Environmental Safety • Boston University • Brandeis University • GZA • Genzyme • Harvard University • Ionics • Massachusetts General Hospital • MIT • Netcasters, Inc. • Northeastern University • Poloroid • Stop & Shop • Triumvirate Environmental

Overview of Progress

Charles River Bacteria Data Percentage Water Quality Standards Attained



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Note: EPA New England offers businesses and municipalities information and assistance to improve compliance with environmental laws and be better stewards of their local environment. Please call to learn how EPA can help.